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GOD'S CALENDAR

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE

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REMEMBERED MUSIC

CHARLES S. PARMENTER

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God's Calendar

By
WILLIAM A. QUAYLE

CINCINNATI: JENNINGS AND GRAHAM
NEW YORK: EATON AND MAINS

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List of Photogravures

Remembered Music,		*Frontispiece*
January,	page	11
February,	"	15
March,	"	18
April,	"	23
May,	"	26
June,	"	31
July,	"	36
August,	"	41
September,	"	48
October,	"	53
November,	"	61
December,	"	71

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God's Calendar

Hours and minutes are man's invention. Weeks and days and nights and the month and the year are God's inventions. A seventh day for rest, God said; and the week was put in the calendar. One daylight and one dark; and the day was created. One advent and exit of the silvery moon; and the month was included in its silvery circuit. The planet's panting journey around the sun; and the year became a terrestrial and celestial fact. Twelve comings and goings of the moon, with a few days excess thrown in for good measure, as is customary with God; and God's calendar is an accomplished loveliness.

The Calendar is God's Invention

The Romans named our months. I wish

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God had. The Romans lacked imagination. They were seriously matter of fact. God is imaginative. He dreams dreams. Anybody could know that about God; for has He not made flowers and childhood and clouds and the spider's web and the dewy morn and the rainbow-arch glow as of gems, and the mountain crag and the undulant valley and the swift wind and the glow of love and the summer land and the blue of sky and sea and the downward rush of waterfalls for draining of mountain snows? God touches things with poetry as Fall touches leaves to garnet and gold and sardonyx. If God had named the months He would have them called after events; but the Romans called them after men or gods, or, those failing, after the numeration table. We inherit their dull, unsympathetic, ineffectual cognomens, and like many inherited things would be glad to be quit of them but seem not to know the way. If in anything pertaining to our travel through the year, we have right need to a virile yet tender vocabulary which shall give our hearts a clue to the year-time it is

The Author Wishes God had Named the Months Because He is so much the Poet

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in the month-naming. If such symbol of the month had been given to the name of each month then had we felt a sweet appositeness in the name. No two months are alike. We group them in seasons; but the the months give us no right to. Each month is like a statue which has a right to its own pedestal. They are not grouped figures like the Laocöon but single figures like Canova's Psyche.

No Two Months are Alike

They are like Canova's Psyche, Single Figures

September, October, November are not relatives and have therefore no reason to be called by one patronymic. September is yet sweaty with growth. October is a poet who has forgotten whither he journeys. November is the melancholy of the leafless branches. What blood relatives are these? November, December, January, February and March might better be grouped together. All these are lifeless; all are storm-swept, all are wintry-breathed: all breathe out threatenings and slaughter like a murderous king. No, we have not come at the seasons rightly. We have found a name and have hunted out victims for the name we found. We have been far from

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accurate. Truth-telling has not been our failing, that is evident. Though this much is to be said for the names of the seasons. They have poetic insight. They are Saxon names, and Saxon, barbarian though he was, had insight which the Romans had not.

The Author Wishes that, Seeing God did not Name the Months, the Greeks had Because Poetry and They were Friends

For my part I had rather the Greeks had made the calendar. Poetry and they were friends. They had enough childhood in their hearts to make them name things from resemblances: that is poetry. The Greeks talked of "amaranth" and "nux" and much besides that, is very beautiful. But they lacked in application. The crying of the Bacchantes was on them; and they went they knew not whither. They were lax astronomers. They were no chronologers. They invented no clepsydra. But Pleiades and Hyades they saw and gave them the names they were to wear. But the Greek failed us. He might have given wings to the months and did not; and the matter-of-fact Roman in his matter-of-fact way took hold of the almanac and called the months by the names which thereafter God's months were to wear.

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January is named from Janua, a door. February was the month of expiation. March was the Mars month, namely the battle month. April was from Aperio, the opening month. May was named after the goddess Maia. June probably from Juno the wife of Jove. July from Julius Cæsar who was born in this month. August after Augustus Cæsar. September, October, November and December after numerals, respectively seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth, and, as we now reckon even the numerals are untrue, as everybody knows December is not the tenth month, but the twelfth. But in the time of this calendar making this notation was correct enough; for the Roman year began with March and not with January. Anyhow this christening is palpably awry. Either the month came too soon or we came too late. However, things have gone too far for rectifying. The child is baptized; and his name cannot be changed. More's the pity.

This Christening is Palpably Awry

January is the cold month. February is the thaw month, March the wind month, April the wild flower month, May the vio-

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let month, June the rose month, July the wheat harvest month, August the maize month, September the grape month, October the apple-gathering month, November the leaf-fall month, December the snow month, but since Jesus came, has become the children's month—the snow with the summer sun shining full on it.

May is the Violet Month and June is the Wild Rose Month and September the Grape Month and October the Apple Gathering Month and November has Leaf Fall and December has Christ

January is the month of freezing: February is the month of dreaming of Spring: March is spring beginning to blow Winter into the sea: April the month of hunting for wild flowers, the morning of the spring odors and earth smells: May is the breath of blossoms of Spring: June is the month of love and ecstasy: July is wealth of toil of growth: August is the sweat month of the year: September is the hope delayed which doth not make the heart sick: October is the jewel month when the world from sky to sky is become a jewel casket: November is the month of decrepit age, shivering, inarticulate, and snow-white of locks. December is the cruel, masterful king.

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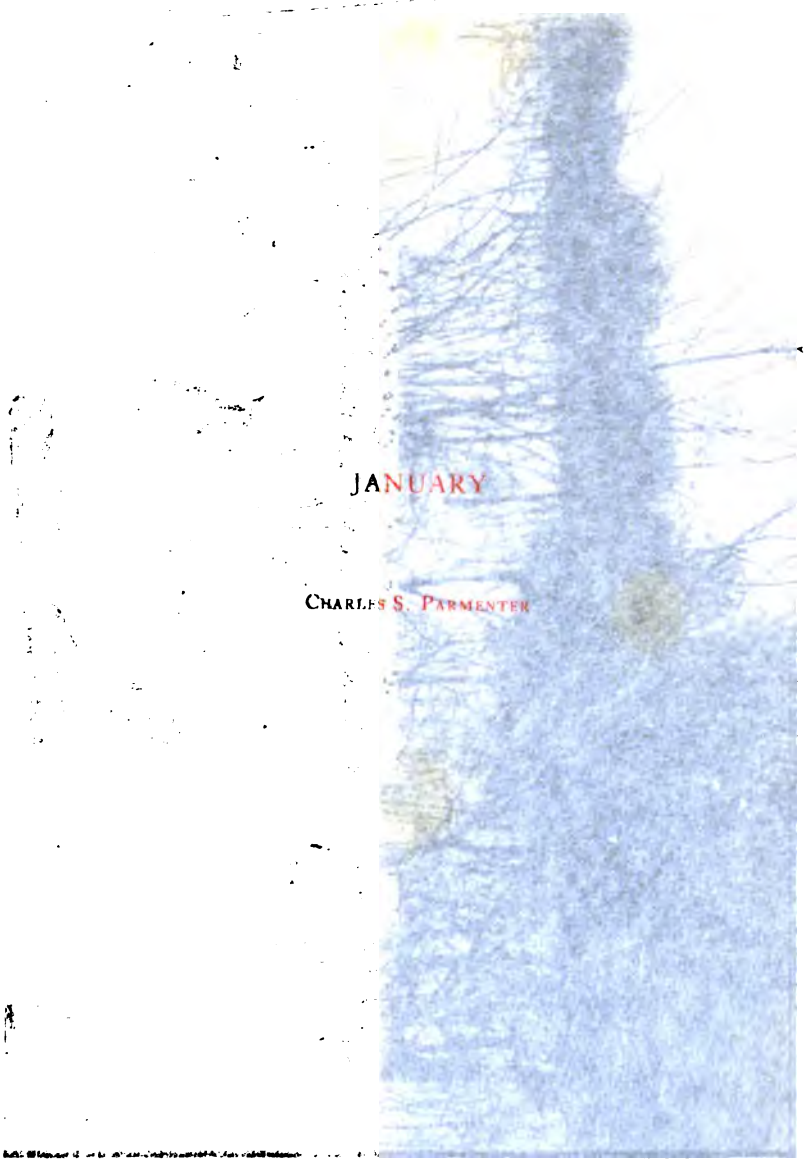

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January

Now Winds Career in Tree tops

JANUARY is the frost month. Then winter does frantic battle. Winds blow fresh from the ice fields of Norland nor lose a trifle of polar spleen in their rush. The snows stay thick. Sleet is likely to panoply tree and shrub and snow field. Then the quails, gentle folk, are apt to be sealed in a snow tomb by the cerement of the sleet. We shall find them when Spring comes where the ice crust overtook them. This is over again the story of the happy maid in the tale of old "Genevra," who, hiding in glee from her happy pursuer, found tomb for herself in the chest in which she hid her happy self. Winds career in tree tops. What glowing stories are rehearsed in January when sleets gar-

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ment the world in silver. When the sun shines on this ice-owned world then are marvels re-enacted before the eyes of men. Earth has become a battle-mooded army where everything is soldier and every soldier is battle-clad in silver armor; and the saber and the spear shock together and the sun glisters on gauntlets and spear and battle-axe and sword held up against the sky; and all this silver-armored world seems in frantic battle-charge. Then the birds are hungry. Buckberries are ice-coated; and the winds jangle the icy branches of seed weeds like a chorus of bells. Music there is, but no bird breakfast. Then it is the birds grow half tame and feed with the chickens and forget their usual snubbing the folks. Then moonlight nights and the rivers where girls and boys build bonfires in their cheeks and in their hearts, and where the winding river is become a carnival of beauty and moonlit splendor and of summer gladness in winter time. In January snowy nights the rabbits grow jubilant. Great fun is in snowy woodlands on dark nights when from every

Earth has Become Battle-mooded Where Everything is Soldier

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runway rabbits gather in; when the pugilist rabbit stamps with his hind feet his battle summons, and when all Rabbit Town is out in holiday gladness; and they caper to the music of icy branches swinging in the winds, or if the winds be quiet, the banjo music of their own happy hearts. Then it is the young gentleman rabbit invites his lady friend out to an oyster supper on my apple trees, young, esculent, delicious. The rabbit is lax in his sense of other people's property. For all I can observe he is a genuine socialist and loves to divide up other people's substance. January is winter at noon. Weather cuts up now if at all. The sense of mastery, cold, cruel, relentless is in winter's heart. It is a menace. No quarter need be asked; for no quarter will be given. Battle to the death is what January challenges to; and the oak trees and the chickadees and the wide-armed elms answer the challenge.

The Sense of Mastery, Cruel, Relentless, is in Winter's Heart

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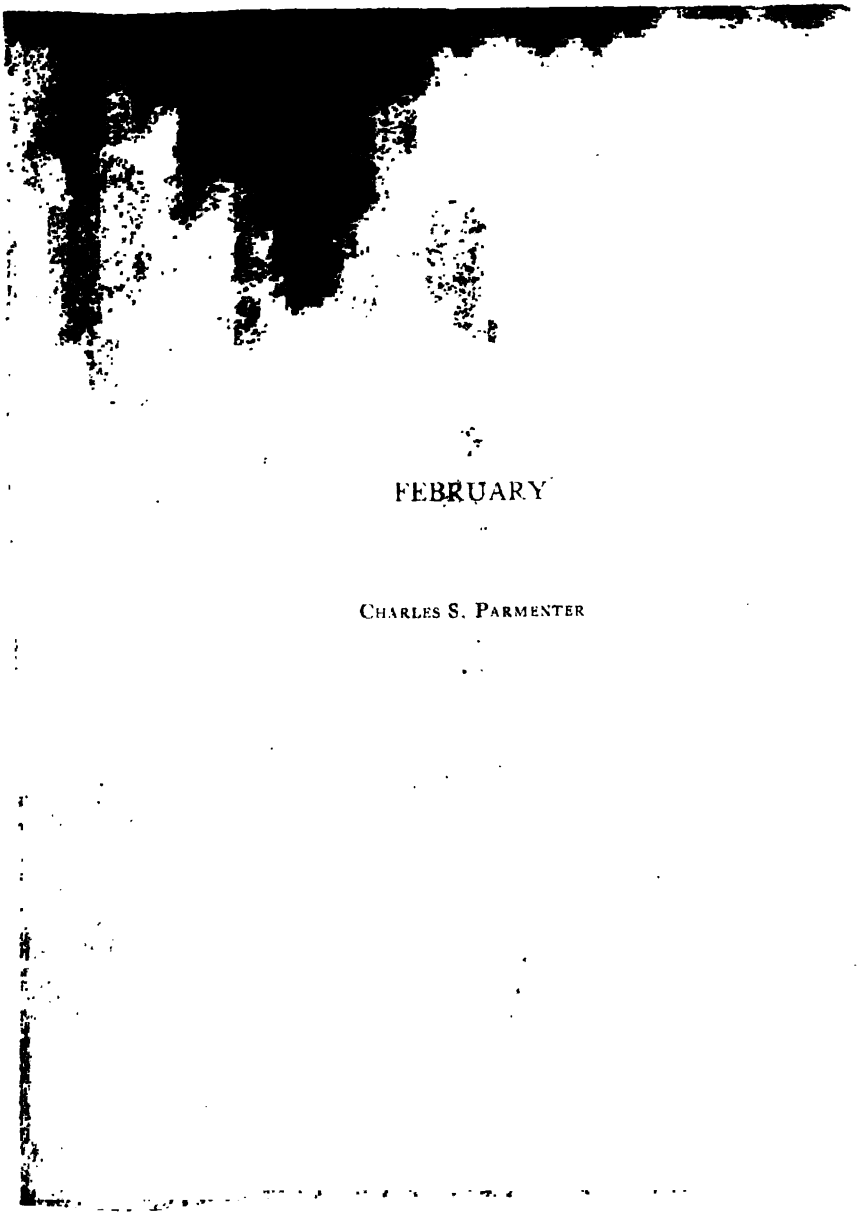

FEBRUARY

CHARLES S. PARMENTER

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February

February is Winter Losing Heart

FEBRUARY is Winter losing heart and sitting down for a breathing spell. Even Winter relents. February is Winter relenting. After the perfect jubilation of harshness in January, February grows tenderhearted. The sleet melts: the snow turns to slush: the creeks are swollen and noisy: the snow fields become tattered like an ill-kept child: the black ground shows in patches: cattle huddle around and near the friendly haystack and chew cud in a mild way as to say, "We knew your weather would moderate." Cattle are your genuine philosophers. They never fuss. They take what comes. They hump up when snow falls and the wind is piercing; but they use no bad words that I ever heard, and sleep out in the snow without cover uncomplaining as a soldier trained to hard campaigns. When February

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comes, with its temporary geniality, the cattle kick up some and frisk as to say, "Bully for the weather! We are tickled!" But a frisky disposition when there is anything to frisk at, and an indisposition to kick when there is something to kick at, are worthy of consideration. People might learn from the critters if they would only take them as schoolmasters, and chew their cud more and their grievances less. February thaw says "Winter is getting ready to quit." Not right away to be sure. Winter is dignified; and dignity, as is well known, is a trifle stiff in the joints, and not given to alacrity of motion. But water runs and jumps in the stream beds which have been hermetically sealed for months, and the sound of their goings is in the air, and the country boy gives a whoop like an Indian in a war dance and thinks how before very, very long a fellow's fingers won't get so cold foddering the horses and watering the stock. February is Winter's promissory note to quit business after awhile if he is left alone in business while he needs to stay.

February is Winter's Promissory Note to Quit Business After a-While

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March

March is the feast of trumpets of the year. It is the wind month. Jehu's driving was a jog trot compared with the speed of the March winds. The loose-speeched call March blustery. They should be more definite. The Jews had a gala festival in which trumpets owned the air. It was a jubilant festival; and I wish I had been at it and operated a trumpet. There is something victorious in blowing a horn, even if it is your own. This the language-makers knew; for when they wanted a word to express triumph they coined it from "Juba," a trumpet's jubilant triumphant, delirious delight. Now March is the trumpet month, the jubilant month. The winds bring their loud sounding trumpets

March is the Feast of Trumpets of the Year

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with them, and wear them at their lips. I confess to liking the racket they make. The winds hold their Fourth of July in March, and why not? Wouldn't Fourth of July be better in March? Undoubtedly. You can not enjoy your own energy on the Fourth of July when it is July. July is too hot for ease in Zion or jollification. You have to stop too often to mop the perspiration (i. e. sweat) from your forehead. This interrupts the firecrackers. You can't wipe your face and shoot firecrackers at the identical second. Even an acrobat can't do it; and what acrobats can't do it is idle for the laity to attempt. I think highly of the winds for their change of time for their Fourth of July. They knew their business better than our Revolutionary Fathers knew theirs. When March winds seize a trumpet then the bass horn man in the brass band will do well to desist. Long winded as he is, the March wind is longer winded. The bass horn man blows until he is the color of a turkey gobler's gills, from chin to timber line of the forehead. Not so, March winds. They never grow

The Author Sets March Down as the Original Cornetist

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red in the face. Their wind never gives out. They are the original cornetist, and can't be beat. How March winds do work at their trade. Not one indolent chord in their throats nor a fatigued cell in their lungs. They press their lips and puff their cheeks and out-trumpet the sea. What glorious ructions they have with each other. Wind on wind, gale on gale, blowing in each other's face as if each wished to be the solitary trumpeter for the festival of winds. Some good friends of mine are worried by March winds. Not so I. I glory in them. Their rage entices me. Myself would blow on a March trumpet if any one would loan me one. But no wind will. His long, lean trumpet reaching from his lips to the sky-line is never taken from the lips. March winds do not blow trumpets for fun. That is their business which they stick to with astonishing fidelity which every looker on can testify. Let us not be grumpy with March winds. They have a Herculean task on hand. They are trying to blow the moored ship of Winter, large as an ice-field, glowering

March Winds Out-trumpet the Sea

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as an ice-berg, cold as the tyrannous North, —trying to blow it loose of anchor and blow it into the open sea. March winds are trying to get rid of Winter; and they can not intermit their task if they would accomplish it. Blow, blow, ye March Winds; and at the last the cruel winter ship will break anchor fluke and hawser, one or both, and will dash out to sea like a defeated navy. You, March winds are spring's Rough Riders. You are boisterous lovers of flowers and gentle green of spring leaf. You are April's lovers. March, if we have traduced you in our thoughts, absolve us. We knew not what we did. March, of the fierce hand and the snarling lip and the valorous trumpet, give us your hand. We loved and love you.

Blow, Blow, Ye March Winds

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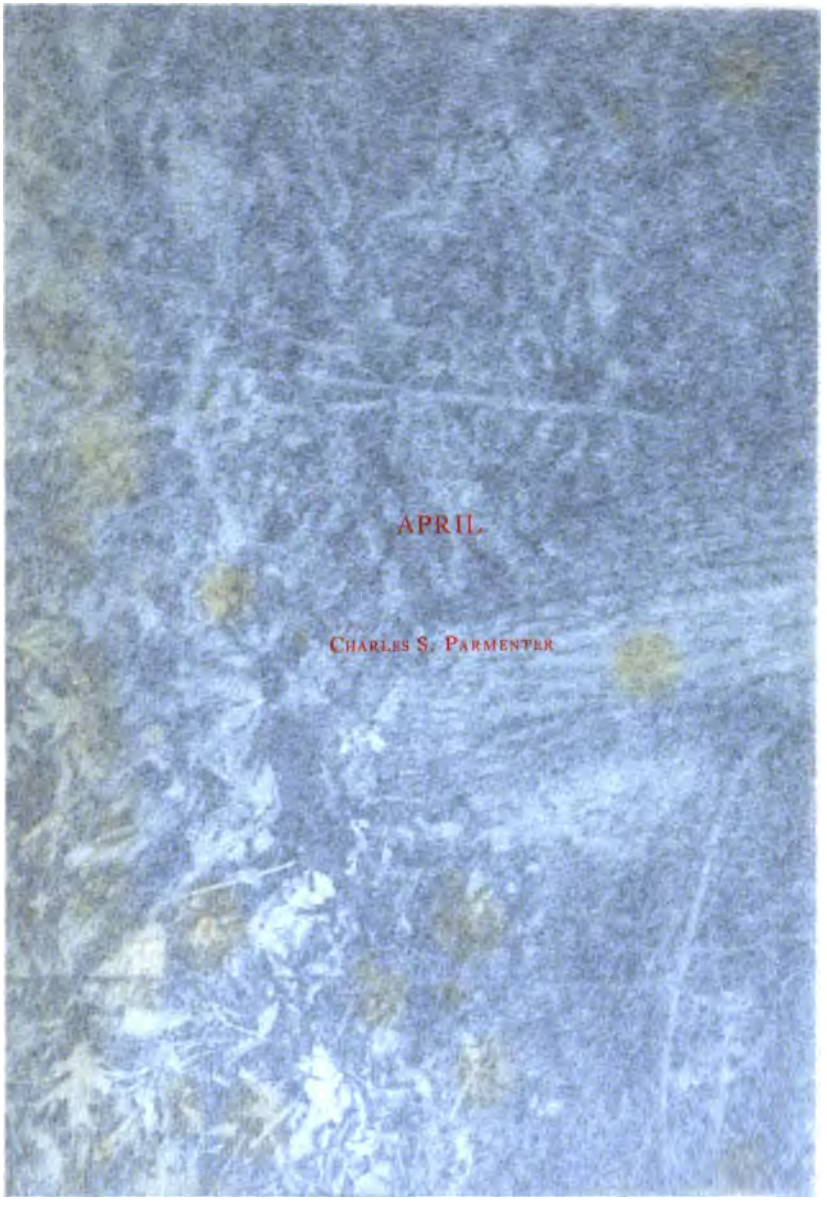

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APRIL

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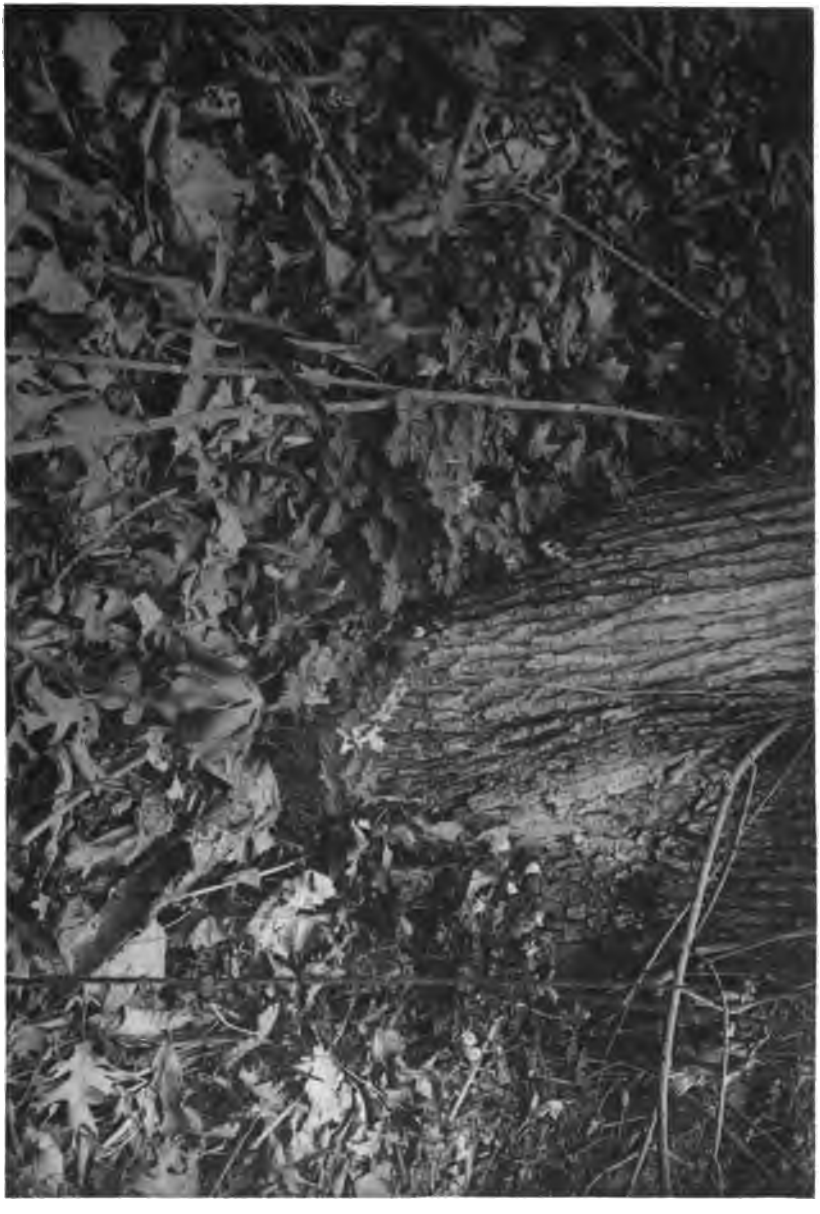

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April

April has Eyes Sky Blue and is Clad in Green Kirtle Braided with Wild Flowers and She has Smiling Lips and Her Smile is Warm and Her Voice is the Blue Bird's Voice

APRIL is a gentle maiden with eyes sky blue and clad in a green kirtle braided with wild flowers. She has smiling lips; and her smile is warm though her hands are cold, the snow-flakes being not quite melted from them yet. Her voice is the blue bird's voice. She sings with her lips closed as singers who hum a minor in an accompaniment to vocalization and then trills like a surprise, "Ber-mu-da! Ber-mu-da!" What a lyrist she is. She sings with those sweet shut lips meant for kisses, as the south wind knows full well, and uses them for what they were meant. April is the willow's greening and the elm in bloom and the adventurous grass blades' surprising emerald in places sheltered

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from the winds but open to the sun. And how April's stiff fingers thaw out so as to pick the first violet and wear it at her lily throat! The blue jay, rough and ungallant, but touched with the shy beauty of April's form and face, calls out in strident encore to her singing, "Hear! Hear! Hear!" and goes clanging past. The frog fingers his chilly lute; and the blue bird flits from post to post like a winged amethyst; and his melody bubbles like a gentle spring on a creek bank. And Spring is leaning to pick cowslips or caress a dog-tooth violet or smile at a Johnny-jump-up as Johnny-jump-ups lift their smiling faces tear-wet, yet smiling to hear the jangling blue jay call. And at last April is singing with lips wide apart like lips of a flower; and her voice is like rapture and her song is "Spring! Spring! Spring!"

The Frog Fingers His Chilly Lute

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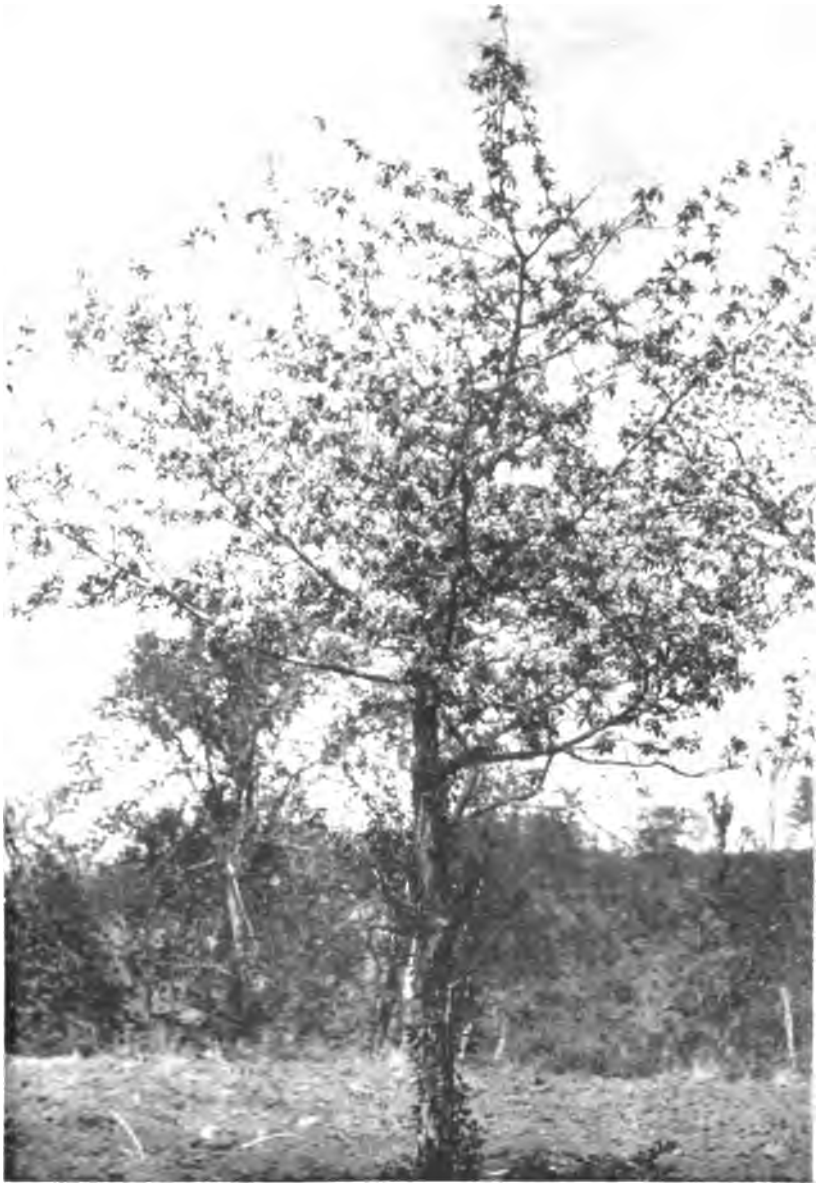

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May

May! The wild crab blossoms! That is enough joy for any month. That wealth of aroma drenches the air. Before the blooms come I anticipate their color, their perfume, their wild-wood wonder. When they blossom I bask in them as sunlight on days of earliest Spring. When their leaf withers and flowers and fragrance are forgot, I forget neither fragrance nor petal. They bloom for me so that for me May is washed clean across by the wild crab in bloom, blown across, all the glad month, by the grace of promise and fulfillment and blessed memory. So is the wild crab blossom everywhere in May. Spring is come when May is come. The hide-and-seek of April is past. The coyness of those earlier days is put aside. May comes outdoors bare-

May! And the Wild Crab blossoms

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headed with hair of burnished gold, bound by a blue ribbon of flax blossoms falling down on naked shoulders and toyed with by the wind—comes out of doors and stays singing in the sun all day and in the stars all night, sheltered only by the tent of heaven like the wild birds and neither lonely nor afraid. In April we are never quite certain what month we live in save by appeal to the almanacs, which is too crass a procedure for dwellers in the out-of-doors; but in May, weather matters are settled amicably. We know where we are. The south wind tells us. The west wind tells us. The robins tell us. The apple blossoms tell us. The butterfly tells us, Our late comer from the South, the giggling wren, tells us. The clouds tell us. The wheat fields beginning to give a sea-answer to the wind, tell us. Withal everybody and everything tell us. We are not left to guess any longer. Spring is here and has set up housekeeping for good. Small wonder is it, then, the robin thrusts out his scarlet breast and calls, "Goody! Goody! Goody! Goody!

May Comes Outdoors Bareheaded and Her Hair of Burnished Gold is Bound with a Ribbon of the Flax Blossoms

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O Goody! Goody! Goody!" and refuses to stop till night grows dark and opens up his happy laughter again ere dark is quit but earliest morning

"Rims the rock-row,"

and calls again under the windows of the morning star, "O Goody! Goody! Goody!" May is here and Spring has come to stay. In May everything ought to have a holiday. Truly we can not. Likely enough it is not best for us or we would have. The birds themselves are over-worked in balm-breathed May. Nests are a-building. Birds, belike, are God's prophets giving the needed message for the heart; "Be up and doing;" but, for all, what a time to be at leisure and go gadding with the swallow whither we will; to lie on the earth and hear things grow, and see the grass spear press toward the sun; to see the flowers swing censers full of incense as a temple lamp, to hear the laughing feet of Spring stepping lightly among her blossoms, and hear her fingers toying with the fruit trees' blossoms and hear her carol till the

O Goody, Goody, Goody! is What the Robin Sings

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lark stays his limpid note to hearken; to feel the touch of the moist lips of the dew upon your face, and lie out at night till dawn, careless of slumber. Have you used the blooming apple tree as tent and slept under its curtain all the night through, if sleep you call what was mostly waking? Life is starlit in May. All things wear wings in May. Every lip has its song in May. Bees drone and sing of toil by every flower when May flings out her crop of blossoms. Lambs neglect bleating for joy of frisking in May time. May day! And the world laughs out loud in mad hilarity when May "comes glinting down the strath." But when the wild crab glows like a sunrise, and limbs sprawl out against the blue sky in a rapture of flowers and incense, then May smiles and laughs loud as if to say, "I am May! Spring in bloom. May am I named. My other name is Gladness, and the pet name my lover calls me is Song." And the wild crab stands blushing with gladness and distilling honey breath like a heather cliff uplifted against the sea. May month, I kiss thy feet.

Life is Starlit in May

May Month I Kiss Thy Feet

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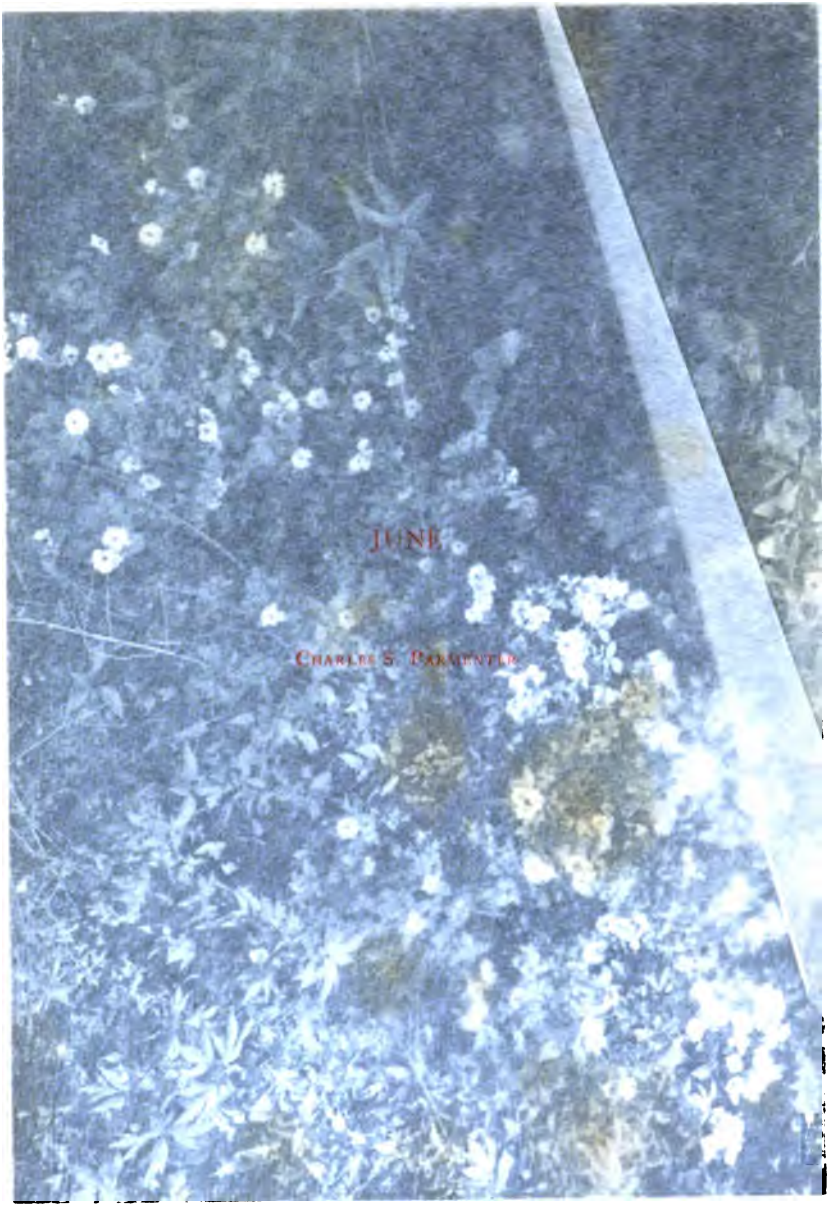

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June

JUNE for the wild rose blooming! June never wears at her throat other than a wild rose flower, nor could a colorist like Titian conjure up a tint more enticing than the wild rose tint. It is the sunrise pink the wild rose bush has had the genius to paint its blossoms with. June is the rose month, I do not forget that. But God's calendar is not made by things men grow but by things God grows Himself. Maize subjects itself to cultivation; but maize grows wild even as it grew in Indian fields and as a staple for the earth. Wild roses, gentle of perfume, flushed like the cheeks of a happy girl, petal dainty as cut by some skilled lapidist from sardonyx freighted with wonder. Wild roses

Wild Roses Gentle of Perfume, Flushed Like the Cheeks of a Happy Girl, Freighted With Wonder

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are not double. I love them for that. The wine splendor of the Mareschal Neil rose does not please me with its bulb of winey petals as a single wild rose does. Some flowers do not improve by doubling up. The violet does not. The rose does not. Simplicity is the heritage of violet and wild rose. They are so satisfying as they bloom in the wild that any finger's touch on them is like a finger touch on the frost on a grape cluster. Thickets of wild roses on June ravine sides or in ravine beds or clumps of them across a pasture field where the flocks are feeding, rose thickets smiling out in perfumed laughter. O day in June when the wild rose blooms and the wind strays indolent as drowsy thoughts and the blue sky has its upleap of wonder, and the bird nesting in the rose thickets tosses on a spragly bit of rose branch and sings its madrigal in pure joy of life and nest and rose in bloom and love—when the rose thickets bloom and June days laugh out loud, heaven is nearer than the white clouds sailing fleets across the sky.

Simplicity is the Heritage of Violet and Wild Rose

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Such days are raptures. They come but never go. They live through all the stress and fret of winter tempests. June day, bloom day, day of the wild rose flower and leaf, day of sky and singing stream, June, wear thy wild rose flower against thy throat now and forever. I shall know thee afar by that dear token.

Such Days are Raptures that Come But Never Go

And June is the month when the prairie blooms with spendthrift gardening. When the June wind blows free and full, and the wonder and splendor of youth comes by, touching the green prairie grasses, and far and near shine the multi-colored lights of prairie wild flowers that go gypsying with the wind and bees, then see what God does on a day in June upon the wide, wild width of prairie madcapping toward the sky. Then Rapture catches your hand and leads you as he will. In June, along the lush prairie plains grow the uncounted multitude of the spiderwort, the stately stalks flowered out to blue so that I have seen spaces blue as the skies of Paradise, stately guardsmen holding up their banner of blue, it is a vision meet for the

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heart. And the wild pea lifts and flings its sprawling branches above the top of prairie grass and tosses out a sprangle of yellow flowers like warm sunlight, and the brown-eyed susans flash yellow as gold with their brown eyes looking intently at the sun's face as to see if their lord be looking; the wild indigo with its frond-like fern almost as gray as ashes and its purplish bloom as if it had seen the heather smile and were mimicking the smile; the blazing star lifts its cluster of spools twined about with red thread; and the prairie cactus stands very big and forbidding with their blades in battle mood; and the paint root blooms out its red as with intent to anger a bull that bellows about the pasture; and the lark whips the wind with its wings and spurts its limpid song, and the curlew calls, and the plover hovers ere he lights; and the grasses are in a reel of hilariousness when the winds rollic far. June, love month, rapture month, sweet June and the prairie, sweet June and the wild rose!

The Lark has His Spurts of Limpid Song and the Curlew Calls and the Prairie Wind is Wild With Glee

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July

July is the working man, brawny, naked armed, sunburned, bare-breasted, huge-handed, man-handed, naked-handed. July is the farmer of the year. Stalwart, singing like a plowboy, working like an owner of a farm glad for the chance. July fairly tires a strong man out just by its tirelessness of toil. July does n't grow fatigued; but you do, watching him. Everything leaps toward flower or fruit. Harvests yellow on plains and hill. Seen from afar the golden wheat fields with their thousand tents mind you of Heaven whose pavements are all of gold. Blackberries are ripe. Things grown in gardens are ready and make your mouth water. Then wild iris blooms in marshy places.

July is Brawny, Swarthy, Huge-handed

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Then the herds pant in the shadow of the woods or stand in the stream knee-deep and fight flies with the wet brush of their tails. Corn is growing like mad and casting brave shadows. Apples are bulking on the branches showing what they are about to be, not exactly soon, but pretty soon. Grapes are clusters of emerald with not a hint of purple but beautiful to see. Bees are working eighteen hours a day, knowing no eight-hour law. They are farmers for long hours. Streams are going dry, if they flow through prairies, and stand in diminished pools in the woodlands. Mullein stands his straightest and has his spike of yellow flowers and his velvet foliage. Forest trees are tigering it into growing, sending out long thrusts of growing stalks which by and by graduate into branches. The eaves of the chicken coop are full of the chatter of the sociable wren. Argosies of white clouds sail at the wind's will across the summer sky, beautiful to see far beyond the telling. Thunder heads lift white as snow peaks range on range or bulk black like basalt cliffs; for the day

The Corn is Growing and Casting Brave Shadows

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portends a tempest. The red bird whistles for fun. The indigo bird with his insinuating voice sings from a telephone wire. Mourning doves drift along the fields in company, father, mother, children all out for an evening's frolic. The wheat fields are peopled with farmer folk loading the wheat for stacking or thrashing. Everybody works in July. Even the firecracker does. The days are hot but arduous. Things are doing when July rolls up his sleeves. But his toiling is as the toiling of the happy heart. No peevish scolding, no querulous fault-finding, only a radiant joy of having work to do and rejoicing in the doing of it. Now is the time to lie under trees flat on your back and forget your book and watch the swaying branches to reveal a patch of blue sky which always comes to your eyes, no matter how often seen, as a distinct surprise. We can not grow used to the sky. It refuses to be commonplace. The wind hunts you up as thinking you are hiding. The shadows and the warmth make you drowsy. The tree chuckles a little through all his branches

Now is the Time to Lie Under the Trees Flat on Your Back and Forget Your Book

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when the wind comes sparking. If you lie beneath the sycamore the broad serrate leaves will poke fun at you by turning edgewise against the sun and spilling a whole cupful of dazzling sunshine upon your drowsy eyes. July is the year's hired man.

Sycamore Leaves Spilling Sunshine Upon Your Drowsy Eyes

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AUGUST

CHARLES S. PARMENTER

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August

August is here; and maize is growing. Maize owns August body and soul. August is, so to say, a grower of corn. I have called this esculent "maize" because corn is an old world word meaning any cereal. Maize is an Indian word meaning only what America had to plant and grow. Those crass, indolent Indian farmers (if it be not a sin to call their shabby culture farming, at all) are dead; but the maize they played at growing, we Americans work at growing and have made one of the staples of the world. All Americans are proud of their corn crop. I wish they might call it their maize crop. But called as it may be, the crop is very great and feeds the herds that feed the world. Indian corn is

August is a Grower of Corn

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a stately vegetable. None like it. A corn field is a valorous sight, being like an army of crusaders with spears tufted with a lady's favor and pennants waving. I confess to loving the sight of a corn field. Stately, strong, tall, spear-like, graceful, music-making when the wind wanders through the corn rows, sword-edged; for every corn blade is a sword blade, and I have bled often at the edge of their swords at play. And when corn tassels, as it does in August, and when corn silks as it does in August, and the pollen begins to fly and fall from the plumed tassel down on the silk, red or soft silk-yellow but fine-spun as woven by a silk weaver, and the air is redolent with the smell of the pollen till the sky is sweet as heather dew; when the corn stays up at nights to grow, and you can hear its joints crack in the passion for growing, then August is at its noon. Know you not the poetry of August growing corn? Then are you much benighted. In a fence corner hemmed in on two sides by woods sweltered on by the sun, this maize field in the picture makes me hear the

When the Corn Silks and Tassels and Perfumes the Hot Noon With its Breath

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swish of playing swords of the corn blades when we smell the corn scent and see the stately riders line on line with spears erect, with banners set marching, marching for the helping of the world. It is a brave sight and very heartening. Would Jan Ridd, neighbor of Bagworthy forest, had been here to see and enjoy it.

August is the month of what I will call delirious heat. I love the swelter of it. I walk long miles in August just for the fun of being out in the broiling sunshine in my shirt sleeves. Some people would perspire in this condition. I do n't. I sweat. That is more August-like and is likewise more to my liking. What palatable heat August heat is. How it fairly smokes up from the fields. Corn requires furnace heat; and through August—I may be amiss, I often am, in the judgment of my friends; but I am of opinion that August heat is different and better than the other heats of the year—I fairly bathe in it as in a limpid stream. I walk and sweat and sweat and walk. I do not grow querulous but glad. As I am taking my long glad Au-

August Heat is Delirious and Delicious

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gust walk the quail begins to pipe at noon. He is not a noon musician in the usual, rather the dewy morning and sunset evening are his music hours; but in August he is so glad for the spendthrift sunshine that he changes his routine and at noon calls across the glistening fields of corn, "Bob White!" "Bob White!" "Bob White!" This time I timed him, and with regularity of a watch at almost eleven seconds he would cheerily call, "Bob White!" "Bob White!" I love his music-making on his oaten pipe but never more than at this August noon.

Now the Quail Whistles at Noon

August is the month of insect music. I do not advert to the mosquito. He is a cannibal, and I can prove it; and it behooves no Christian to give page room to cannibals, so none of mine. O what a heyday of music the insects make in August! I revel in it. Then the crickets chir. Then the tree toad sets his catarrh instrument going. Then the wild bees hum drowsily enough to put you to sleep be you never so wide awake. Then the tame bees go into the false clover blossoms

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and drink them dry at a single gulp. Then a score of voices chime coming from what insects I can not tell but full of all that blessed gladness which God has so kindly put into the heart of every living thing. I listen and praise. Such a happy world, so full of song. In August, birds have grown tired singing or are grown too fat to sing, and in any case sing but little. Then the insects tune up. At night, the tree toads set up such storm of minstrelsy as that you think them tipsy at a wake. They are tipsy drinking evening dew. At noon and night and the day through, you shall hear the strident locust which in the Spring you seldom hear, save at evening. How the locust's voice—cicada the Greeks called him, but I like not his Greek name, I favor America's—with its blur of sound delights my ear and makes me elate. I go and stand near a branch of a hedge and wait till he tunes up again and fairly stumbles in his tune so glad is he in life. So is the August heat squeezing his music out of him as honey from the comb. August

Such a Happy World, so Full of Song

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with shirt open at the throat but with smiling lips and rollicking laughter, tending corn and ripening grapes and bidding the quail and the locust be jocund as a running water brook—August I love thee!

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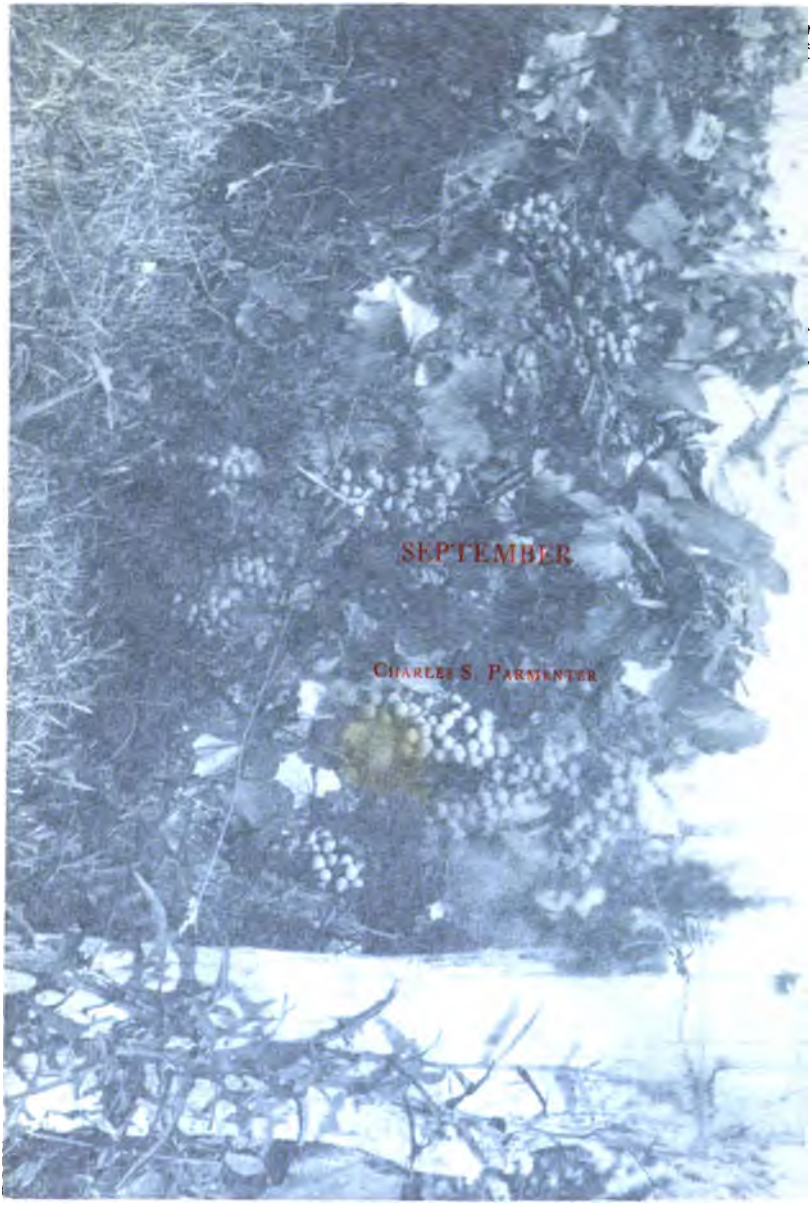

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SEPTEMBER

CHARLES S. PARMENTER

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September

September is the Grape Month

SEPTEMBER is the grape month. What other praise needs to be sung for September? One look at the vineyard in the picture suffices to put a body in love with the month that holds such clusters in her hand. What can be more artistic than a grape cluster shadowed by grape leaves? The color, the grape shape, the hoar frost wherewith God has seen fit to cloud the purple of His grape cluster, the way clusters hang with indolence luxuriously graceful as a Venetian gondolier, the mild fragrance which gives to every vineyard its own atmosphere. The bees know where to come and seek this wine ready for their lips. The sky half Summer and half Fall; the clouds blown and scattered and very high and very, very

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lovely and wistful as a woman's eyes looking for him she loves: and the crows cawing diligently from the shag of woods on the hill: the hawk taking leisurely yet magnificent flight, having fun for himself in the sky which he evidently thinks he owns and thinks made for his pinions: the sunshine growing a trifle dreamy like a poet: the winds dawdling with the clustering grapes seen through lattices of leaves. September, what a goddess thou art in any wise! Who can choose but love if he have the seeking heart? In September the sweat of growth is ended. The rush toward fruitage has given way to the quiet smile as at evening after work is done. Maize ears lop and its blades begin to grow toward gold and rasp in the wind like a rusting sword. Summer clouds are departed. September days by their clouds, note on the dial, Summer is ended. The piled-up wonder of thunder heads no longer fills the horizon with amazing mountains nor drifts huge bergs through a sea of blue sky. Clouds are grown diaphanous. They straggle, blown bits of wonder incomprehensible in grace and full of all the mystery

The Sunshine is Growing a Trifle Dreamy Like a Poet

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and sorrow of evanishment. September clouds make your heart ache. I look at them with a mood of tears. They seem so fragile as if a glance of the eye would dissipate them though they are actually more stable then clouds of Summer. The winds which have blown them out like banners seem to have fallen fast asleep; but the cloud banners refuse to let their white and silken folds fall asleep with the sleeping winds.

September is the month of putting up prairie hay. I would not deny that this same putting up hay is to my knowledge something besides fun; but for all that, haying on the prairie has its poetry and its fun. I who have nosed around much among the haycocks will be bold to say that no fragrance of haying is to be compared to the fragrance of the prairie hay. And to lie by moonlight on prairie hay is better than beds of down. When prairie winds blow free and two men toss whole haycocks on top of you as you build the load and you are drenched with the grass odor and deluged with the South wind, then haying

September Clouds Make One's Heart Ache. To Look at Them is to Have the Mood of Tears

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has become perilously like poetry. September is to be written down in the calendar of such as know the prairies as the month of prairie haying. And never September comes but I think of a stooped man with blue keen, laughing eyes and shag of beard and hands rough as tree bark and strength like the strength of ten and voice like a Winter's gale for opulence of wind and music, and how he used to pitch hay fields to me and I would load the hay fields he pitched, and then would unload and he would stack; and I would give—O, I would give years of living to see him only *once* and that once but five minutes—but I must wait till the morning breaketh and the shadows flee away.

Making Prairie Hay Sometimes Becomes Akin to Poetry

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OCTOBER

CHARLES S. PARMENTER

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October

I Call October, a Pet Name

OCTOBER I call the aster month, though to be candid that is a whim; it is like calling your beloved pet names. You name them for fun. You call them what you do as David Copperfield called Dora, "Mouse." We give pet names not by logic, but by freak of tenderness or playfulness or chance suggestion. So I do October. I call it aster month. Not but that is true enough. I do not seem to know how to prevaricate even in my least ethical moments. So great is character! In my sleep when I talk I talk facts. How wholly admirable this is! True, this has been suggested by such as are envious of my uprightness that about the only time I do tell the truth is when I talk in my sleep. This talk, of course, is frivolous in the extreme.

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So, though I call October aster month by way of giving this beloved season a pet name it is accurate in meaning. Then the asters own the highways and byways and quiet fields and cluster like girls in beautiful groups. But October is Indian Summer month and month of much besides. But wan October, you of the dimmed sky and the drooping eyelids, and hectic cheek, and drowsy distances, and clouds high and fallen asleep, and leaf a-flutter, falling but loath to fall—chaste October, with thy starry aster fields in tryst with thee.

Asters, how I love them! Though as I give this matter thought, what wild flower do I not love? They are all favorites. Some I love more, but none least. Sometimes I have had a silly conceit that God set them to their trick of blooming for me! It was a foolish thought, of which sort I have many. And yet as I con this pleasant theme, I see my thought was not all like a poet's conceit. In a wise true way God did mean each flower for me. A flower is his who loves it. Every posy is a God gift to the one who plucks it for love of it. God picks the

October is Indian Summer Month, That and More

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posy and hands it to the hand held out for it; and do I not hold out my hand for each wild flower in its turn, and does not God put each flower in its turn in my holden-out hand? "My wild flower" still I say so, finding my foolishness was my wisdom.

In October I Hold out My Hand for the Aster

And in October I hold out my hand for the aster. Those rosettes bloom profusely but never one too many blooms for me. I love each as if it were rare orchid grown far up among the thick shadows of the Amazon nigh the Andes roots. White asters, what stars they are, white-rayed sun-centered, tossing topsy turvy to winds which go not by steady and onward goings but with sudden jumps like a rabbit's running. White asters have tiny faces but faces fairy sweet. The stalk is many-branched and the branches are many-flowered. I have counted a hundred blooms on a single stem. No parsimony shall you find with the white aster. Who can tell how full of heart's-ease that flower is? Sometimes the flower is lilac colored, sometimes dim white, sometimes subtle purple, always subtle beauty.

In New England on the slow roll of Octo

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ber hills drenched with autumnal splendor, I have seen purple asters toss out sprangles of flowers dyed in the fresh squeeezed juices of the grape. And in Kansas along hedge roads where wagons climb wearily a little hill, there have I gathered these flowers of Paradise. They never tire me, as I truly hope I never tire them. We are always friends, the asters and I. They know I love them as I believe, but anyhow I know I do; and that suffices. Certain it is that asters are an October flower. The golden rod now and then flings out its flaming banner but mainly the gold is tarnished. These flowers are in October past their prime. Sunflowers have squandered their estate of sunshine. But asters love October. When others are leaving, asters are coming like a belated guest. They do not apologize for late arrival and have no need to. They come when they get ready. We will wait till they arrive. We will love them not less but more because of their late laughter. If asters came in May when all the spaces of the fields and woods were populous in beauty they might

I Have Seen Purple Asters Toss Out Sprangles of Flowers Dyed in the Fresh Squeezed Juices of the Grapes

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be one mercy among many; but when they delay their coming till October then they are the one mercy a-blossoming. They are stars fetched from the night skies and planted on the fields of day where we ground folks may pick them and wear the stars in our houses for adorning.

In October the birds are grown neighborly. They are flocking so as to be gone from us. Robins in Summer cared for none of their kind save their immediate family (wife's folks don't count with robins), but when October comes blood tells and robins cluster in rose-breasted brigades as some rich-clad soldiery. I have counted in a group this October a hundred and twenty robins taking supper on a single sward. They are grown sociable making ready for their Southward flight. It brings autumn to my heart to think of the going of the birds; but I know when they return they will bring Springtime with them to my heart, and so I begin my tune in minors but end it in rejoicing majors.

In October Asters are the One Mercy A-blossoming

The blackbirds always social, in Octo-

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ber gather in black clouds which change when they go out to practice flying manœuvers for the long southward flight. Their voices click and click as if their wings needed oiling. How they fling in spirals up and out and back and down and fill a clump of trees with their blinding cloud of midnight murk and their unnumbered voices all saying, one way or another, "Ordered South." Birdies, you make my heart ache. Cease your moan.

Then Ivy Burns Red as Sunsets

And October has the crimson woodbine. Then ivy burns red as sunsets. Then emerald columns are like the pine trunk girdled with furious flame. Then the forest of ivy-grown trunks, such I have seen along the Kaw, are like a whole pine forest in conflagration. The wine-flame runs up the trunk, girdles it, runs out the branches, flings out a swaying spray of fire past the last limb twig, sways in the wind, blazing but not consumed.

The birds circle and rush like stormy wind, the ivy pillars burn but refuse to burn to ashes, the asters laugh out loud

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along all fields and up all hillsides and by all laggard roadways. The birds own the sky: the fiery pillars own the woods; but asters, purple and white, own the fields from prairie to the sea.

But Asters Own the Fields From Prairie to Sea

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November

November is month of leaf fall. Not that this month monopolizes that melancholy poetry. October is much given to it. But November has that for a business. If, when November puts lean finger across the lips and stumbles out in the dark to die, any leaves are left dangling on a naked branch, it is because the leaf has inherent tenacities which are wholly out of the usual. Some leaves refuse to fall until Spring comes and thrusts them off to make way for the greenery of the year new born. Not death but life kills some forest leaves. But November is assiduous to strip each gaudy rag of finery from every tree. November kindles the last flame on the hearth of the year and then drenches

November Kindles the Last Flame on the Hearth of the Year

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to gray ashes its many chemic lights by the downpour of the voluble November rains.

This leaf fall must be set down as the pathos of the year. Much as you may love the glory of the Fall you can not keep your heart from aching when the leaves turn from flame to oak leaf subtle, sullen brown when all the glowing leaves drop one by one or in companies drenched in their unthinkable splendor and the wind sweeps them into eddies and swirls them into new piles of wine and rinsed sunshine and all the intermediary colors, so that you seem to be looking on wrecked rainbows lying on the woodland path. Cottonwoods change from their shiny green glittering like metallic leaves to the wan yellow as of faded sunlight and hold on, rainy sunshine answering to the wind and disinclined to be still or to be thrust away from their rainy minstrelsy. But one after one these leaves let go, their weakened fingers having lost grip and their hearts having lost courage; and when November "falls on sleep" the last yellow heart has been broken; and the

Leaf-fall is the Pathos of the Year

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cottonwoods stand stripped to the skin like a naked swimmer; and November winds use the bare twigs for the strings of a harp on which to make November threnody.

November Winds Use the Bare Twigs for the Strings of a Harp on Which to Make November Threnody

All bushes of undergrowth save the wild gooseberry are emptied of boskage. You can see through the underwood far as the eye can travel through the pillars of the trees. Of the leaves we say with choking breath:

"After life's fitful fever they sleep well."

I know not if there is poetry beyond the walking in the woods full of falling leaves, full of precious odors, rusty-voiced to the goings of your feet, multitudinous beyond the counting, what used to be a cloud now come to be a coverlid, what used to whisper

"Like the music of seas far away,"

now rustling to the walking feet of men or the bounding feet of squirrel or rabbit or the pranking feet of the notionate wild wind or the clicking tread of quail coveys, leaf and brood so much a color as that

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trained eyes can not tell bird from leaf save as the bird flutters above the fluttering leaves. Leaves are always beautiful, always beneficial. When Spring first hangs them out they are radiant and tiny or bigger or biggest, but flash like an emerald held as to catch the light. When Summer comes they grow profusion of shadow and music and whisper or sing each to other all day long and all night long, ever moving, never quiet. How seldom have I seen leaves at absolute rest. Their sails catch all the dreams of wind breath and fluff on the wind gladly as saying, "Sweet Wind, am I not thine? Blow on me with thy breath; thy faintest kiss shall thrill me. I wait for thee." This restless answering of Summer leaves has always struck me as being motion all but as perpetual as the flowing of a stream, only a stream must flow while the leaf, were it not so eager for the wind, might fall quiet. But every leaf thinks it is a sail of some sweet Argonaut and must answer for the goings of the ship.

Wind, Blow on Me With Thy Breath

Then when leaf fall comes the elm leaves grow unsmiling brown and sycamore leaves

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crinkle in their haughty smiling like lips of a dying aristocrat, and soft maples gather a gentle light on them like an unthoughted smile, and sugar trees kindle their bonfires which burn so amazingly as to almost make the dark night light, and the oak leaves set up violent conflagrations, and the tulip trees pour down with lavish hand the golden splendor in which when one wades he thinks he wades in the surf of a golden sea, and the beech trees stand and smile and smile in subtle sunlight laughter, and the ivies spill all their hearts' blood out upon their garments so that you are persuaded they have died of a broken heart—when are leaves not miracles? Their office, we are told by botanists, is to imbibe sunlight for the trees. They are bibulous, only they drink not wine but sunshine. They are working for the trees whose leaves they are, and on which they cast bewilderment of shadow. But they do not think they work and do not know they work. They have long holiday. They are as birds which, while they are house-building and house-keeping and caring for their birdies of the hungry cry, yet, in it

We Wade in the Surf of a Golden Sea

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all, think they are having fun—do not toil, but rejoice. So the leaves toil, but know it not. They think they are set to catch the moonlight and the morning and the light of stars and the caressing of the winds and when they die, their death is as exquisite as the death of the "Lady of Shalott."

"In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining,
Over tower'd Camelot,
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white,
That loosely flew to left and right—

Leaves Think They are Set to Catch the Moonlight and the Morning and the Light of Stars and the Caressing of the Winds

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The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot.
As the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott."

Heart
Would Thou
Couldst
Catch Leaf
Music Nor
Let its Flute
Note Vanish
Ever More

And they make blankets under which spring flowers sleep, shut in from storms and shut out from winter, so that when April trills its blue-bird call and the flowers wake, they smiling like a waking child, ask, "Have I slept all night?" Tree leaves, you are a parable of service set to song. I wish my heart might catch your music, nor let its flute note vanish evermore.

November, what are you doing with your nervous fingers? And November,

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staying in nothing from the thing she does answers in her voice like moaning, "I am picking leaves." And November is. With diligence, which I have sometimes thought might be better applied she is picking leaves. Idly withal, though with such ironic diligence, drifting them on the rude earth, aglow with rainbow tints, picking day and night, never ceasing, never ceasing, till at last the lone crow in the leafless tree lords it over the world. The leafless tree, with its one black, funereal plume of the dusky bird in the leafless wood is a picture of the melancholy November.

One Funereal Plume of Dusky Bird

To walk in the leafless woods, to see the dull gray of the clouded sky covered not by clouds but by a single wide stretched cloud

"ashen and sober,"

which covers the sky, leaving not a speck of blue as big as an evening star, gray-sailed clouds own the heavens, and the leaves are under your feet and sullen winds blow above your head, and the crows call from the woods, remote and near, and

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the wind swings lash out over his galley slaves of leaves and drives them hither and yon as he will, filled with the lust of conscious tyranny; and the leaves race as mad to flee the tyrannous lash of the winds:

The Wind Lashes Out Over his Withered Leaves

"And the harbor bar is moaning."

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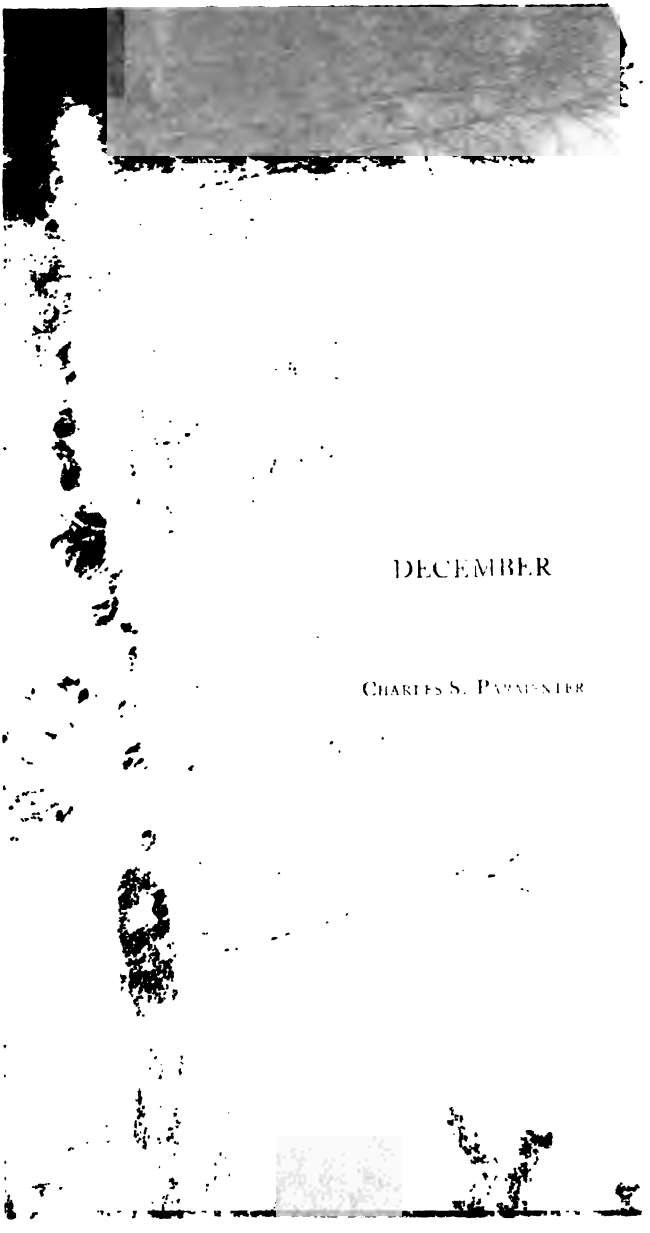

DECEMBER

CHARLES S. PAVARSTER

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December

December Never Sheathes His Sword

DECEMBER is month of bitterness and mirth; for is it not the inaugural month of Winter and the sole month of Christmas? Before Christ came it was only month of icy Winter fierce in onset of frost and snow and raging icy wind, but since his coming December, however angry its beginning, its ending has always been in a burst of laughter, wild, hilarious, all but universal. You would not think of December as the month of peace and good will. Its menace is as the onset of drunken soldiers. Ruthless rapine is its destination. Its sword is never sheathed but hacks and hacks in eternal fury. But into this fury month God has injected the gladness of May and June combined. December is

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month of singing beyond rose-embowered June. There is no mirth like Christmas mirth. Never has there been since this old world was young such inextinguishable laughter as in the Merrie Christmas time. So when we think of December we think less of its being the first Winter month than of its being the one Christmas month. December is Winter invaded by June.

When December Becomes Artist He has Memory of Summer

At November's close all trees are stripped naked and stand out ready for the tempests of Winter wind; and in December this wrestling begins. The winds riot: the trees riot. The frost makes tropical pictures on the window panes so that kitchen windows are transposed into tapestries and pictures painted by nobler masters than Turner and Innes. Is this a memory of Summer that makes the frost paint Summer pictures on its windows? Who knows? But Winter does. His artistry is of the equatorial Summer, though his pencils are of the polar Winter. When December begins wild winds and spitting snow, shivering is in fashion even with sparrows and squirrels; and frosts

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nip you in fun or earnest, you can't figure which, and when Spring comes to you more as a myth than as a memory, when it seems as if the warm south wind never drowsed past you, and as if you never had heard the drone of bees and the click of the grasshoppers' wings or smelt the heavy odor of the milkweed and had never seen the swallow glass fair form in the quiet of the evening river. All these things are past and remembered as if they had been seen in dreams, in happy dreams.

December winds leap like tigers and clang like soldiers and curse like corsairs and charge like the Light Brigade; and skies are sullen having forgotten laughter and the naked trees stand in the murk of midday and plot against the storm. Then snows begin to sprinkle from ashen clouds and eddy in pools as the leaves have been doing the past month, or run in spirals through the sky, Wind and Winter acting out their tragedy; and all the night snow falls and curls until daylight wakens and the world is a new earth sculptured of Parian marble, by some unnamed artist,

December Winds Leap Like Tigers Ruthless, Ruthless

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faultless, lovely, lonely, barren, frigid, pitiless, mirthless. December is a barren heart. No songs are native to his lips; he is sullen as a dying tyrant. He is a Herod in whose heart are murders even of smiling babes. December has a sullen leer rather than laughter—and in his heart is hate of Summer and its mirth of bird and flower.

Tyrant December Learns a Christmas Tune!

When, O wonder!—when December is at its frozen noon and riot is king, all on a sudden mirth invades this spacious Winter and voice of man and woman, youth and maid, schoolboy and little toddling child, leaps to a song, and the icy church bells sing a carol and Christmas chimneys have radiant light and everybody hangs his stocking up and waits to see what Santa Claus will bring and people forget their weeping or are ashamed to invade Christmas with their tears—any how December has been silenced of his boisterous anger by the more boisterous good nature of the whole sweet world of happy hearts. And unregenerate December himself learns a Christmas tune and sings with tempestu-

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ous mirth a melody, the burden of which I catch to be: "Merry Christmas, Peace on Earth, good will to men. Christ is come and has changed my Winter into laughing Spring. I am less December now than June. My flowers are children's smiling faces and my birds' singing is the Christmas laughter of such hearts as have heard that in Bethlehem a Child is born and the angels sing and I, December of the frozen heart, have caught the angels' tune, 'Praise! Praise!'"

December has Caught the Angels' Tune

December, myself will learn your tune.

The End of God's Calendar

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